

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT



IN CHARGE OF
LAVINIA L. DOCK

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL AND CONGRESS IN LONDON

THE program is being satisfactorily completed, and we can give the following outline of it.

July 20, morning session, "An International Standard of Nursing Education" will be presented by Mrs. Robb and Sister Agnes Karll; in the afternoon, "The Nurse in Private Practice," by a physician, a nurse, and a member of the laity.

July 21, morning, "The Nurse as Citizen," Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson, Miss Nutting, and Mlle. Chaptal; afternoon, "Morality in Relation to Health," the Honorable Albina Brodrick and Miss Dock.

July 22, morning, "The Care of the Insane," Dr. Robert Jones, medical superintendent Claybury Asylum, and Miss Parsons; afternoon, "The Nurse as Patriot," by the Right Honorable R. B. Haldane, Secretary of State for War, Miss Elston, and Sister Agnes Karll.

July 23, "The Nurse in Mission Fields,"—one paper on "Preparation" by Miss Fox, England, and one on "Practical Sphere of Usefulness," in the morning, and in the afternoon, "The Relations of Nursing and Medicine," by Miss Mollett.

The papers will occupy from fifteen to twenty minutes, and discussion will be chiefly informal.

A small hall will be reserved for sections wishing to give time to special subjects, such as public school nursing, prison needs for nurses, etc.

An exhibit of nursing appliances is being organized. The Irish nurses will have a national exhibit, and the English nurses are arranging group exhibits, each taking some special section. Inventions or devices made by nurses are called for; American nurses are asked to send such exhibits, if possible, or at least photographs of inventions and devices. Associations are also asked to send publications, authors are invited to send books, etc. The promises of hospitality are, of course, as always, abundant and delightful. Mrs. Fenwick will entertain the presidents and official representatives of councils and delegates at luncheon on July 19 after executive meeting; Miss Stewart will receive all foreign nurses at St. Bartholomew's Hospital on one afternoon. The Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress of London have invited 600

members of the congress to a reception at the Mansion House on July 20, and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, wife of the American ambassador, will receive at Dorchester House on one afternoon. The congress banquet will be held on Thursday evening and a visit is planned to the International Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush, with a picnic to Windsor on Saturday.

An inexpensive and pleasant hotel is the St. Ermons, next door to Caxton Hall. Further information as to hotels and boarding houses will be given in the June JOURNAL.

ITEMS

THE report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress that was presented to Parliament in February last is probably one of the most important human documents that the world has ever seen. That which lends a tragic significance to this exhaustive report is the fearful problem of poverty which grows more menacing daily. Nurses are especially interested in much of the report as regards the care of the sick poor whom they come to know especially in district nursing. A "District Nurse" writes in the *British Journal of Nursing*:

" . . . I am convinced that with a small allowance, and the help of a district nurse, many of the infirm might spend their days happily among their own people instead of being forced into isolation and uncongenial society in workhouse wards. I rejoice in the old-age pensions which have brought happiness and comparative comfort to many old people, and I am convinced that it would be most economical from the point of view of the State if many of the infirm had similar allowances, even those who have not reached the age qualifying them for a pension, and if district nurses were employed to look after them as paid servants of the State. There can be no comparison in the cost of allowing an invalid 5s. or even 7s. 6d. a week in his or her own home, and providing the services of a district nurse, who could care for many such invalids, and of maintaining the same person in a workhouse ward, when the upkeep of the building, the salaries of officials, and all the expense which seems inseparable from a municipal institution, are taken into consideration. Those who know the poor can have no doubt which is the more humane and acceptable method. If it is objected that the homes of the poor are insanitary, then they should be made wholesome. That is not a valid reason for driving the poor out of their homes, but for making those homes habitable."

FROM a line or two in the English journal we understand that nurses also come under the provisions of the new old-age pension legislation in Great Britain. How much more dignified and grateful to receive a recognition of service rendered by the State than to owe it to private initiative, however well-meant!

THE Nurses' Co-operation, New Cavendish Street, London, has developed a system of insurance against accidents and sickness which is very satisfactory to the members, each one of whom pays a small yearly contribution, to which the general funds of the Co-operation add a supplement. The nurses are much pleased with the arrangement. During sickness or lay-off from accident each member receives a certain weekly income.

OPPOSITION to the British nurses' registration act fostered by a Dr. Mackintosh, of Glasgow, is the same old story over again; an attempt under specious reasons on other lines to prevent nurses from attaining any share in the regulation and government of their profession. Fundamentally it is an attack on education, as, of course, the easiest way to maintain mastery over any self-supporting people is to control the way they are prepared for their work, for this means, pure and simple, control over the circumstances and environment in which they must live. We wish that every nurse could see that a sharp line must be drawn between the supremacy of the physician over the nurse in the sickroom and the care of the patient, and his control of her living conditions. The first is right, and is to be gladly acknowledged always. The last is wrong, and ought to be resisted with as much determination as we resist the unrighteous control of any other persons who attempt to shackle our ordinary human progress. Outside of the sickroom the physician has no more right than any one else has to decide the question of the human and ethical development of nurses. The physicians themselves are teaching the nurses this very rapidly, and we may depend upon our intrepid British sisters to defend their educational standards. While they do so, we must always gratefully recognize the help they are having from medical men of broad and liberal views, such as Dr. Angus Macphie, who, in the Glasgow press has defended "the only true test of efficiency,—examination by independent examiners."

AMERICANS who are in England this summer should go to visit the historic home of the Nursing Sisters founded by Mrs. Fry, at 4, Devonshire Square, Bishopsgate. There is a beautiful picture there which has recently been presented to the house, of Mrs. Fry visiting the prisoners.

SEVERAL nurses were among the recently imprisoned women who were sent to Holloway for political demonstrations. One of them, a certificated nurse from the London Hospital, has served two sentences. Some day the whole nursing profession will be as proud of these patriots as the world now is of Jeanne d'Arc, who has recently been sainted.

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD was badly defeated in a debate with Mrs. Fawcett, the ayes for the Parliamentary franchise being 235 and the nays 74.

ALTHOUGH the mistake about full suffrage for Sweden was a disappointment, yet certain advances have been made, namely, the women have now been made eligible for municipal councils, says *Jus Suffragii*; then, too, since our last issue the women of Denmark have gone forth in all their dignity to cast their ballots for town and county councils.

DISASTER AND EARTHQUAKE

"LET us now set aside all sentiment, and try to differentiate between the disaster as such and the earthquake itself," writes Mr. Frank A. Perret, formerly honorary assistant at Royal Vesuvian Observatory, concerning the Messina earthquake in the April *Century*. "Let us realize the fact that if the population of these cities had been ten times as large, the disaster would have been correspondingly greater, while the earthquake would have remained the same; and the still more interesting fact that if, instead of these rubble-built cities, a large army had been encamped on the spot, there would have been no disaster whatever, the earthquake still remaining the same. Years ago laws were passed prohibiting the erection of houses having more than two stories, but avarice led to the building of tall, flimsy structures which would accommodate many families, and bring the owners a goodly rental. And yet this was in a well-known seismic area, where quakes were of frequent occurrence, and a great one might be expected at any time."